

AUSTRALIA'S LARGEST GLASSHOUSE OPENS IN GUYRA

Costa Group's \$15 million investment injects new lease of life into rural agriculture.

Guyra, NSW, 17 November 2005 - Top of The Range Tomatoes, a Costa Group company, has today announced the official opening of Australia's largest glasshouse in the northern New South Wales town of Guyra. The glasshouse is home to Top of The Range's blush® brand, premium truss tomatoes and will see the production of 2.6 million kg of tomatoes per year.

As Australia's largest glasshouse, the cutting edge, thermally efficient facility spans 5 hectares (12 acres) under a single roof. Despite its significant size, the current glasshouse is just the first step of a 4 stage development that will see the facility grow to 48 acres (20 hectares) and produce 10.4 million kilograms of tomatoes per year, creating approximately 250 local jobs.

Guyra Shire Council Mayor, Robyn Jackson stated, "The blush® development has directly assisted in the revitalisation of the town and the Guyra community. This is an Australian company that has injected a new lease of life into a country town through a \$15 million investment in Australian agriculture. The blush® glasshouse has already created some 60 jobs including roles for many long term unemployed and indigenous people, and a ground breaking "working mothers shift" which allows mothers of school age children to participate in the workforce. The investment has generated renewed confidence in our town and resulted in numerous smaller businesses also making the decision to set up in Guyra."

Costa Group, Executive Chairman, Frank Costa explains, "Our intention with blush® is to deliver premium quality, best tasting, vine ripened tomatoes with year round consistency to the Australian public. To do this we needed to identify Australia's most naturally efficient location and develop the country's most advanced glasshouse. With an abundance of natural sunshine and the country's lowest incidence of 30 degree plus days, Guyra provides the optimum environment for producing consistently outstanding vine-ripened truss tomatoes."

Environmentally responsible, the blush® glasshouse is wholly devoted to the growing of truss tomatoes in a naturally



recyclable medium, cocopeat. The blush® glasshouse is also highly water efficient requiring 90% less water than standard field tomatoes.

NSW Minister for Natural Resources, Minister for Primary Industries, and Minister for Mineral Resources, Ian Macdonald said, “The opening of the blush® glasshouse is great news for the people and the economy of Guyra. This project has the potential to position Guyra at the leading edge of Australian horticultural development and is a credit to the Costa Group’s commitment to Australian premium fresh produce.”

The blush® development means a great deal to the township of Guyra. The Costa Group, an Australian company, with their \$15 million investment in Australian agriculture have injected a new lease of life into a country town. The blush® glasshouse has already created some 60 jobs including roles for many long term unemployed, and includes a ground breaking “working mothers shift” which allows mothers of school age children to participate in the workforce.”

The glasshouse structure includes 700 tons of glass, 700 tons of steel, 4 kilometers of irrigation piping, 62 kilometers of irrigation house, 31 kilometers of suspended guttering and stands 7.5 meters tall making it the tallest and largest glasshouse in Australia.

